

### **What is the Difference between a Special Education IEP and a Section 504 Accommodation Plan?**

In some ways, Section 504 is similar to IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act), in that it involves parent's rights, evaluation, an individualized plan, follow-up, and reevaluation.

However, there are very important differences: Section 504 is a civil rights law that ensures accommodations for equal access to services, such as instruction that disabled students receive in the regular classroom. IDEA is an educational law where specialized instruction and related services delivered by specially trained teachers is required in order for the student to make educational progress

Examples of information used to consider 504 and Special Education Eligibility:

- \* Physician's Report
- \* Educational Evaluation or Assessments
- \* Parent Information
- \* Health Care Plans
- \* Work Samples and Achievement Data.
- \* Attendance Reports

Parents or guardians will be invited to participate in all of their student's SST, Section 504, and Special Education meetings.



### **A Common Misperception**

A diagnosis from a licensed physician or psychologist does not guarantee special education services. Your student's educational team reviews all available information to determine if his or her disability requires specialized instruction to make progress to address any deficit areas.

What should you do if you have questions or concerns about your child's academic success?

Communicate with your child's teacher, counselor, or administrator to establish an ongoing relationship. A meeting to determine problem solving strategies may be the next step.

Study with your child at home; pay attention to specific strengths, weaknesses, how much time is spent on homework, etc ...

Utilize resources like Parent Portal and Its Learning to monitor your student's grades and assignments.

Contact the Special Education department for additional guidance. A copy of your Parent Rights under IDEA is available through our website.

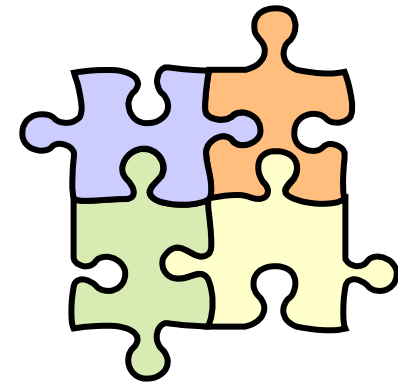
<http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/Page/46532>

**Contact Me for Additional Information**



*Quality Learning and Superior Performance for All*

### **What to Expect From Special Education**



**A Parent's Guide**

**Forsyth County Schools  
An Equal Opportunity Employer  
And Service Provider**

## What is Special Education?

In Georgia, special education services are based on the federal special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

This law protects students with disabilities who are eligible for special education services and guarantees them an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) designed to meet their unique needs.

IDEA provides a number of safeguards to ensure that each student receives a comprehensive evaluation before a determination can be made as to whether or not a student is eligible for special education. Written parent consent must be obtained before a comprehensive evaluation can be completed.

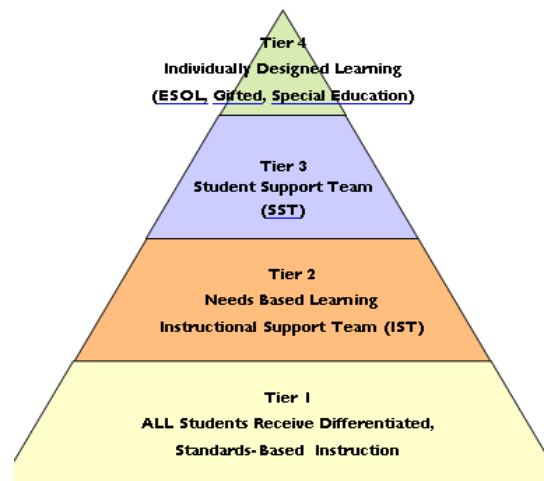
### What steps are involved in determining special education eligibility?

The state of Georgia has developed an intervention model called "Response to Intervention" or (Rtl). This model identifies the area(s) a student is struggling with and which type of research based interventions can be implemented for student improvement. Georgia has adopted a 4-Tier model.

### Who is responsible for determining eligibility for special education?

If the data from the interventions developed by the SST are not indicating the student is making sufficient progress, then a referral to special education can be made. This process involves a comprehensive evaluation to determine if the need for specialized instruction is required for the student to achieve his or her goals.

## Forsyth County's Rtl Model



The Student Support Team (SST) is the educational team that considers special education eligibility. If eligible for services, a special education placement committee meeting is scheduled within 30 calendar days of the eligibility determination to develop your student's IEP to meet his or her educational needs.

### Can parents request an evaluation?

During the Response to Intervention (Rtl) process, parents may formally request (in writing) a comprehensive evaluation from the school system. The student's educational team will meet to consider this request. If the team recommends an evaluation, then the school psychologist must complete this evaluation within 60 calendar days. When the evaluation is complete, the student's team meets to review the results of the evaluation and Rtl intervention data. If the educational team declines this request, the school system must provide it's rational in writing to the parent.

## What happens if my student is not eligible for special education services?

It is important to remember that even if your student does not meet the eligibility criteria for special education, your student still may be receiving support or interventions through the Response to Intervention (Rtl) process or through structured interventions at the school. Your student may also be eligible for a 504 Accommodation Plan if the educational team determines accommodations are required for your student to have equal access to their educational environment.

### What is an IEP?

When a student is eligible for special education, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed. This is an individualized plan that is based on information collected during the evaluation and Rtl process. Goals and objectives are developed based on the deficit areas in order to target a rate of progress that the student is expected to make over a 12 month period.

Accommodations are also considered to allow a student, based on his or her disability, to have an "equal opportunity" to their educational environment as compared to the average student of the same age. Accommodations may be developed in the areas of instruction, assessment, environment, and setting; additional training for staff responsible for the implementation of this IEP may be needed as well.

To implement this plan, special education and related services are determined by the committee as the final part of the IEP meeting process.